

LIFE

SPECIAL EDITION

\$125

WOODSTOCK

**MUSIC
FESTIVAL**







This One



ZCDW-F5X-SBLR



THE GREAT WOODSTOCK ROCK TRIP

I'm not trying to cause a big sensation, I'm just talking 'bout my generation

THE WHO

The original plan was for an outdoor rock festival, "three days of peace and music" in the small village of Wallkill, near Woodstock. What the young promoters got was the third largest city in New York State, population 400,000 (give or take 100,000) located on or about Max Yasgur's alfalfa field near the Catskill Mountain town of White Lake. Lured by music, the country and some strange kind of magic ("Woodstock? Doesn't Bob Dylan live in Woodstock?"), young people from all over the U.S. descended on the rented 600-acre dairy farm.

It was a real city, with life and death and babies—two were born during the gathering—and all the urban problems of water supply, food, sanitation and health. Drugs too, certainly, because so many of its inhabitants belong to the drug culture. Counting on only 50,000 customers a day, the organizers had set up a fragile, unauthoritarian system to deal with them. Overrun, strained to its limits, the system, somehow, didn't break. For three days nearly half a million people lived elbow to elbow in the most exposed, crowded, rain-drenched, uncomfortable kind of community, and there wasn't so much as a fist fight. The whole world was watching, and never before

had a hippie gathering been so large or so successful; so impressive. The promoters, however, discovered that city fathers always lose money—in this case, an estimated \$2 million, some of which they hope to recoup on a film about the festival.

On the night before the festival the incredible procession of the young began in strength along Highway 17B. There were cars with Day-Glo hoods, vans loaded with camping gear, Volkswagens with flowers on their flanks, and gaily decorated old bread trucks bearing signs like "New York Drug Division." There were long-haired hitchhikers wearing beads, headbands, leather vests, tie-dyed T-shirts and floppy hats. At the intersection near the festival site, the massive caravan was greeted by state troopers and directed the last bit of the way along an old farm road named "Happy Avenue."

At Max's farm the early arrivals found young, bearded workmen who had scarcely slept in weeks laboring around the clock to complete preparations. These same people had already spent over five weeks in Wallkill, N.Y., the original festival site. When the residents of Wallkill threatened an injunction against the festival, the promoters



Did you find the directing sign on the straight and narrow highway?

BLOOD, SWEAT AND TEARS

decided to move and had to start from scratch at the new site, a move that cost them an estimated \$350,000.

On Thursday night before opening day construction continued: a hundred-foot crane positioned beside the huge skeletal framework of the stage lifted workmen clinging to giant speakers and spotlights into the night sky and lowered them gently onto waiting scaffolds.

The next morning campers on the hill overlooking the festival site woke to an awesome view. They were surrounded by dwellings of every description—geodesic domes covered with plastic, tepees, lean-tos tossed together with dead branches and scraps of clothing, and even a tree house. People were cooking over hibachi stoves, in holes dug in the ground, in tin cans suspended over wastepaper fires. Be-

low them, in the huge sloping natural bowl in front of the stage, the music freaks were beginning to pile up. No one knew how many were there—only that it was vastly more than the festival producers had expected. But the throng relished every rumor about the attendance, took pleasure in the very sound of the words—"a quarter of a million of us, a half million of us!"

Finally, amid the applause of the gathered multitudes, the elaborate network of amplifiers and speakers rumbled to life. By the time the first performer came on—Richie Havens, filling the enormous bowl with his deep comforting voice—the festival was an hour behind schedule. The sun was going down, the mountain air turning chill. Soon the rains would come. But nobody cared. There was something in the air besides music—a sense of exhilaration and freedom. As one girl put it, "a fantastic sense of unification." Most of the festival performers were brought to the scene in helicopters. As singer Janis Joplin flew in, the chopper pilot turned to her and pointed: "See that hill over there—the one that's not green. That's all people." "Far out," she murmured. "Even Billy Graham doesn't draw *that* many people."

In between performances the speaker system became a community bulletin board of urgent messages: "A green field jacket has been lost with insulin in the right-hand pocket. Joe Smith return home, your grandmother has died. Alan come to the stage, your brother has a problem. Judy please bring the penicillin for John." The spirit of helping and sharing ran strong. At one point harried officials announced, "We are having trouble tracing broken water pipes. If you have stepped on a pipe and broken it please report it so we can fix it." Breaks were reported, pipes were fixed, and a water crisis was averted.

Since the red-jacketed security force—many of them off-duty New York policemen who remained even after N.Y. Police Commissioner Howard Leary warned them against moonlighting—were following a laissez-faire policy, the sweet smell of marijuana was everywhere. Near the performers' pavilion, a young girl stood with a joint in her mouth, rummaging in her handbag. A red-jacket approached. "Looking for a match?" he asked, then pulled out his lighter. "I offered to share it with him," she said later, "but he just smiled and said no thank you. Wow."

It rained through most of Friday night, and by Saturday morning Max's farm was a quagmire. The improvised shelters were drenched, and thousands had slept in the open field to keep their places near the stage. The management from the start had given up selling or taking tickets, and still more people came streaming in through the mud. In the trailers that housed the festival offices, the phones jangled constantly: food was running out, water was short, trucks couldn't get in to service the portable toilets, performers' equipment was stuck in traffic. Then there were rumors—false reports of epidemics of typhoid or dysentery, and a very plausible report that the entire festival was about to be officially declared a disaster area.

Visible everywhere in the mud and chaos were some 100 members of the Hog Farm and other New Mexico com-

munes, who had been flown in the week before to help at the festival. Thirty-five members of Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters drove their Day-Glo bus east from Oregon. Together they set up a free kitchen, gave first aid, eased kids down from bad trips. "The Red Cross is just too sterile and lame to operate in a situation like this," said Hog Farmer Hugh Romney. "Having some person say 'Here's your doughnut' isn't going to help anyone. People need a giggle. We ordered 500 cream pies and seltzer bottles for riot control, but they haven't got here yet." In the Hog Farm's free food line, diners were told: "If you don't eat all your food, please bring it back."

Always there was a concern that all the confusion complicated by the miserable conditions might explode into violence. Near the stage two young men started arguing. As their words got harsher the people around them began to chant, "Peace. Peace. Peace." The chant grew until the argument stopped. When the two shook hands, thousands of spectators applauded.

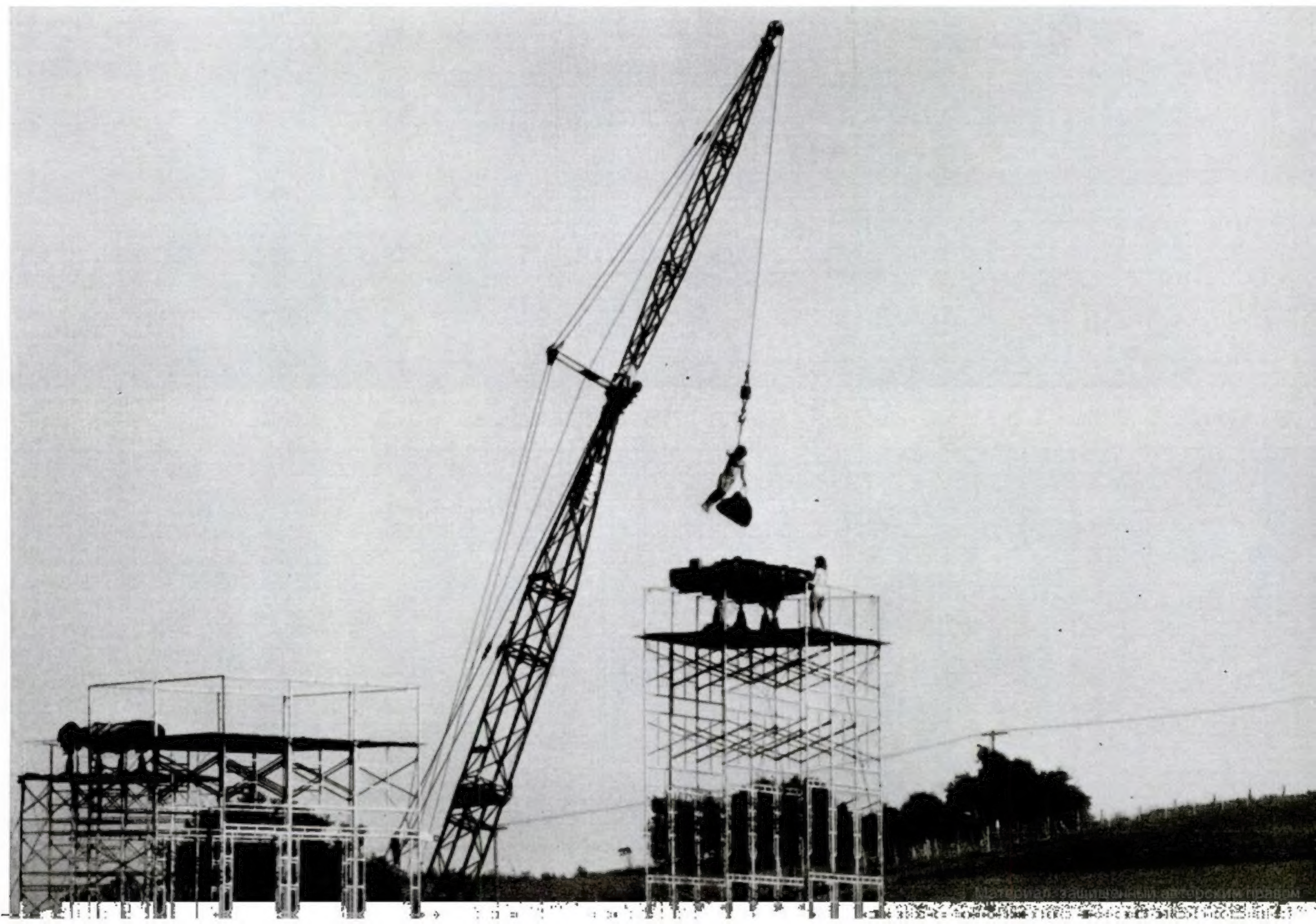
On the stage the intermissions were canceled, the schedule thrown out. Saturday night the music never stopped. At 5:40 a.m. on Sunday when the first light of dawn broke through, the massive, mud-caked audience was sitting in a dreamy trance, listening to the Who do an electrifying two-hour set. When they finished, the Jefferson Airplane played for two and a half hours until 9:30 a.m.

Sunday afternoon the rain came again, this time riding

fierce gusts of wind. Many had already thrown off inhibition and bathed nude in nearby Philippine Pond. Now a few more happily shucked their muddy clothing and stood bare to the rain.

Then the exodus began, a trickle that grew through the night. The kid who had hitchhiked from Oklahoma started the 1,500-mile trip home. The group of 30 from Ohio found each other. The 19-year-old girl who a few days before had slept beside the road where the bus let her off headed back to the bus stop. At 10:30 a.m. Monday the music stopped. And soon, scarcely more than 500 people were left to tackle hundreds of acres of mud and litter that defied description. "We won't be leaving," Hog Farm Minister of Talk Hugh Romney said, "until we heal the scars that have been put into the earth." Considering the difficulty of getting to the festival, the exodus was fast and orderly. By late afternoon cars full of sightseers—Mom, Dad, the whole family—were cruising by, gazing dumfounded at the glut of garbage. Somehow it didn't look historic at all.

For those who passed through it, Woodstock had been a total experience, a phenomenon, a happening, high adventure, a near disaster and, in a small way, a struggle for survival. Casting an apprehensive eye over the huge throng on opening day, a festival official had announced, "There are a hell of a lot of us here. If we are going to make it, you had better remember that the guy next to you is your brother." Everybody remembered. Woodstock made it.





*'These people
like to get together
and see each other
to prove
that they are real'*

JOE McDONALD











I am the egg-man

THE BEATLES



Woodstock Ventures, Inc.: The Promoters

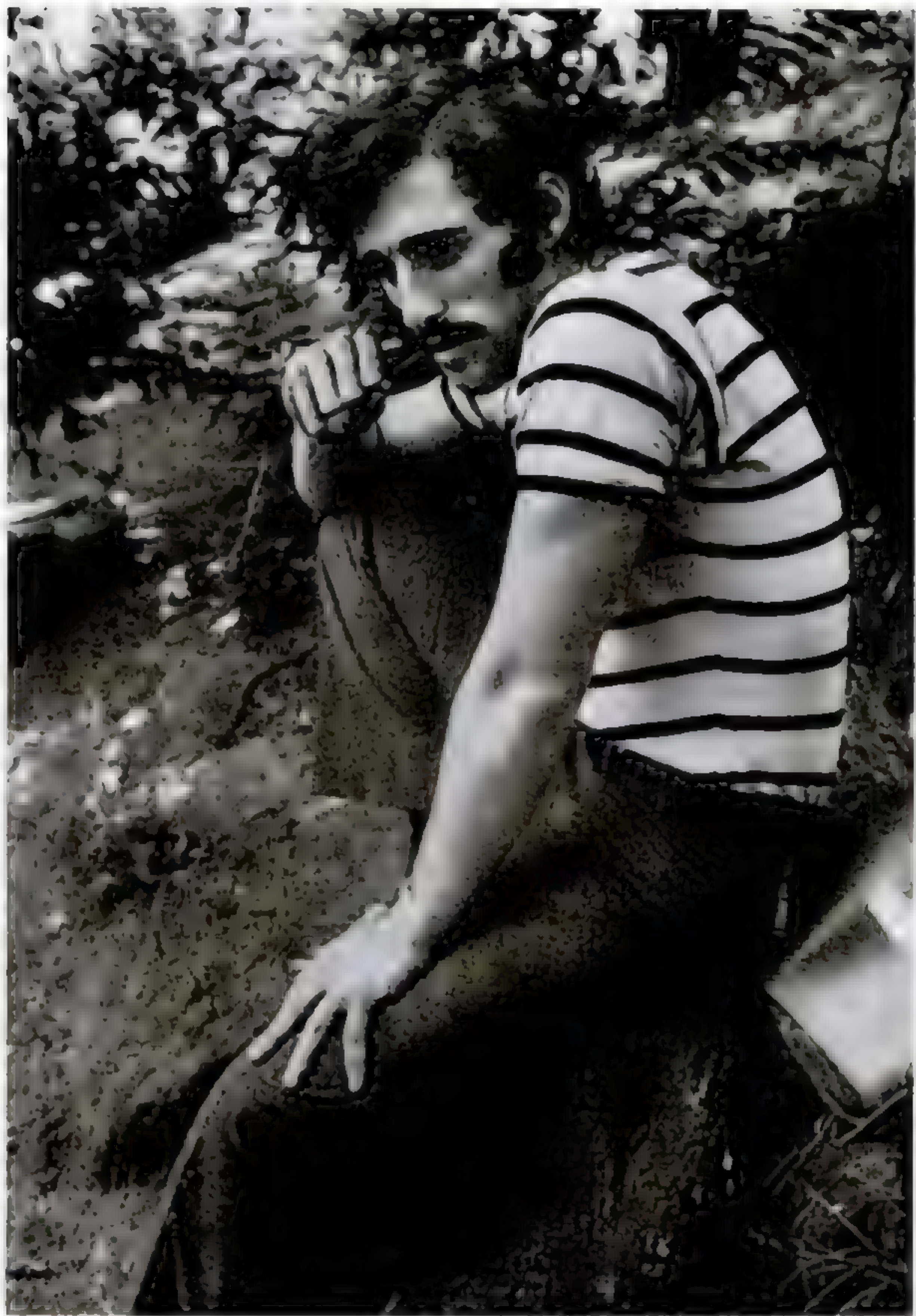
On Saturday, the promoters tossed several cases of free beer from the stage to a gleeful audience.



Artie Kornfeld

Vice President, 26

Except for when my wife and I had a baby, this has been the grooviest trip of my life.



Joel Rosenman

Vice President, 26

Those of us who have worked on this thing have learned an awful lot about each other. You can learn a lot about human nature when the chips are down.

John Roberts

President, 24

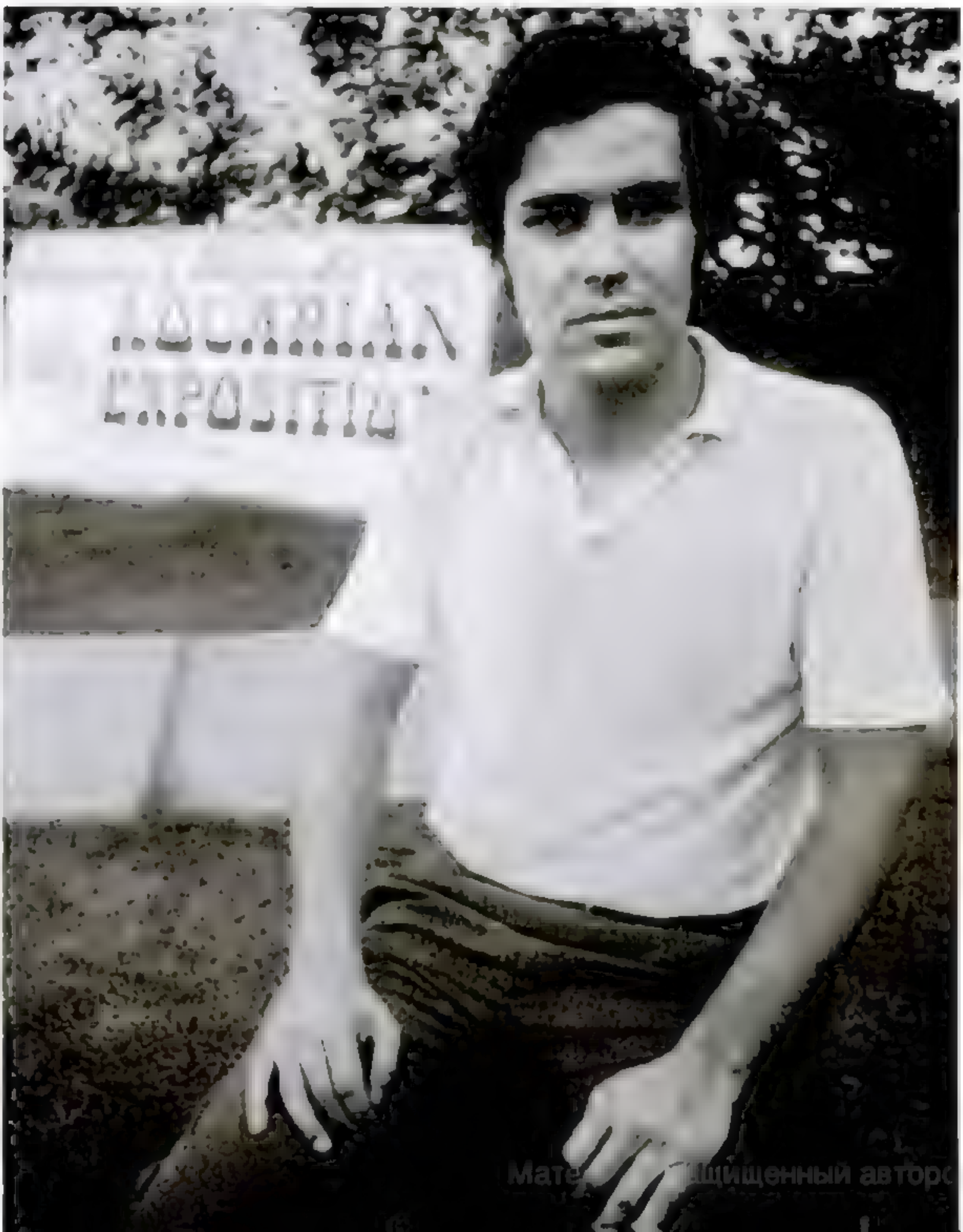
It was certainly worth any financial trouble we may be in.



Mike Lang

Producer, 24

We hope the feelings of peace and pleasure that were in this place will flow out into the streets so all can share them.



*I'm goin' up the country,
girl, don't you want to go?*

CANNED HEAT







***You
never
learned
nothin'
'bout
country
ways***

COUNTRY JOE
AND THE FISH







'Somehow we got through it'

As in any city of nearly half a million, people were hurt, taken sick, were born and died. At least two babies were delivered on the fringes of the festival grounds, and two people were killed—one run over by the tractor he had been sleeping under, the other from an overdose of drugs. Woodstock Ventures, Inc., the production company in charge of the festival, spent nearly \$400,000 during the weekend for emergency supplies: additional helicopters, blankets, medicine, medical tents, doctors and food. Dr. William Abruzzi, a 43-year-old M.D. from Wappingers Falls, N.Y. with previous experience handling medical logistics at sports events and civil rights marches, was the festival's chief medical officer. He gave the following account of the festival's health problems:

We originally planned to have a team of 18 doctors on hand to deal with 50,000 people. When the influx started we called in others until there were about 50 of us. We planned to have three helicopters and ended up with a dozen. Fifteen ambulances were on call. Between five and six thousand people were treated by our medical teams, which is 5% to 10% of what I would expect in injuries from such a large gathering.

The vast majority of injuries, say 2,000, were minor cuts and abrasions. Next largest were related to drugs, almost 800 cases, although most did not require specific medical attention. Many were first trippers who found themselves in an unreal environment and needed a calm, organized place in which to soothe their minds. A lot of weird drugs were around, badly manufactured acid and combinations of LSD-amphetamine and LSD-mescaline. Although some doctors didn't approve, we had a working agreement with the Hog Farm that they would see drug cases first unless it was obvious that medical attention was urgent. Most of the kids just wanted to talk things over, and the Hog Farmers were marvelous with them. Most were back out listening to music in 10 minutes. But I remember one case, a heroin overdose that the Hog Farmers brought to us immediately instead of trying to talk with him, and I'm sure it saved his life.

Otherwise, there were around 150 serious injuries, mostly from people falling off the backs of moving cars, or motorcycle accidents, or just plain working injuries. There were several hundred severe infections aggravated by the living conditions. Then there were the cases we expect in large crowds: epileptic seizures, diabetics without insulin, fevers and colds. With the rain, the mud, the overcrowding and the shaky sanitation facilities, the weekend could have been a tragedy of mammoth proportions. In a city this size you would expect 15 to 20 deaths under those tight conditions. Rather than our medical preparations, I think it was just good fortune that saved us. And then of course there were no injuries as a result of violence. The people who came to us were so gentle and peaceful. The crowd seemed completely different from any one I had ever seen.

The promoters were fantastic. We had everything we could possibly have gotten under the conditions. I am not sure I would have become involved if I had known nearly a half million people were coming, but somehow we got through it.

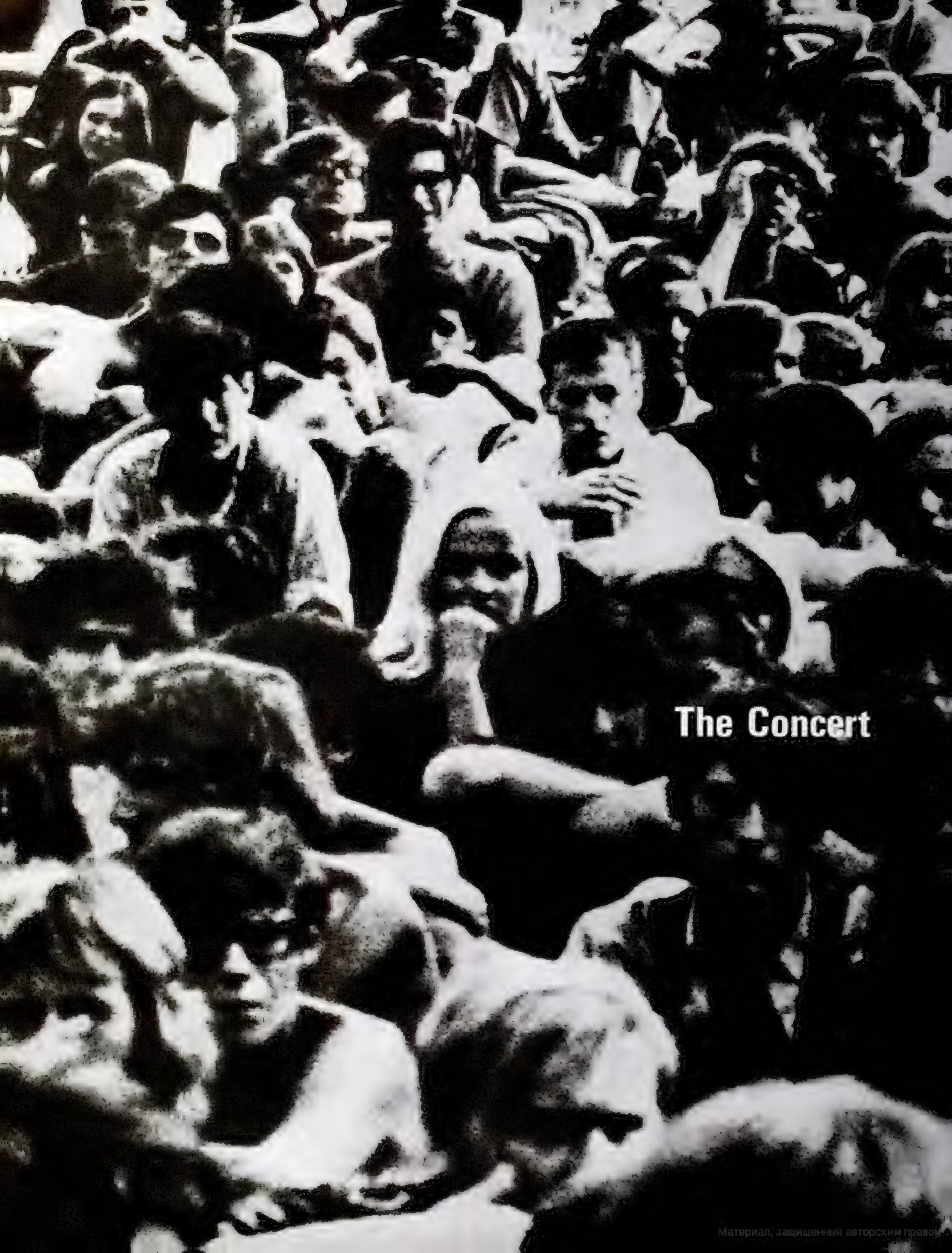






*Hey, mister, can you tell me
where a man might find a bed?* THE BAND





The Concert











MIKE SHRIEVE *Santana*

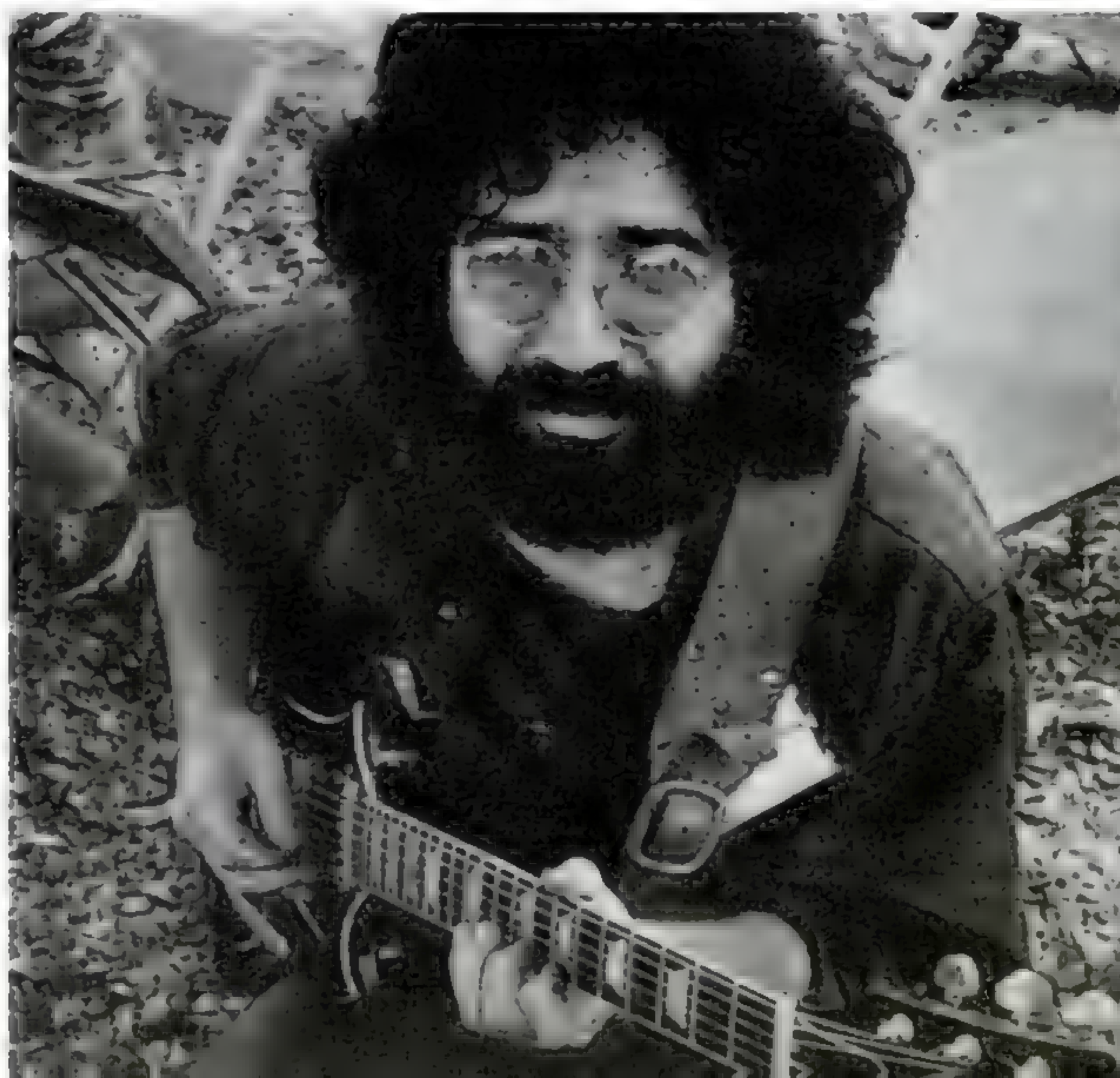


NEIL YOUNG

GRAHAM NASH

DAVID CROSBY

STEPHEN STILLS



DAVID CROSBY
Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young

Backstage: Performer



JOHN SEBASTIAN



JORMA KAUKONEN *Jefferson Airplane*



JOAN BAEZ and ARLO GUTHRIE



JANIS JOPLIN and GRACE SLICK



INCREDIBLE STRING BAND



TIM HARDIN



ROBBIE ROBERTSON, GARTH HUDSON, RICHARD MANUEL of THE BAND

and friends



The Performers

JOAN BAEZ

THE BAND

BLOOD, SWEAT AND TEARS

PAUL BUTTERFIELD BLUES BAND

CANNED HEAT

JOE COCKER

COUNTRY JOE AND THE FISH

CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL

CROSBY, STILLS, NASH AND YOUNG

GRATEFUL DEAD

ARLO GUTHRIE

TIM HARDIN

KEEF HARTLEY

RICHIE HAVENS

JIMI HENDRIX

INCREDIBLE STRING BAND

JEFFERSON AIRPLANE

JANIS JOPLIN

JOE McDONALD

MELANIE

MOUNTAIN

QUILL

SANTANA

JOHN SEBASTIAN

SHA-NA-NA

RAVI SHANKAR

SLY AND THE FAMILY STONE

BERT SOMMER

SWEETWATER

TEN YEARS AFTER

THE WHO

JOHNNY WINTER







JIMI HENDRIX



JOHN and TOM FOGARTY
Creedence Clearwater Revival



RICHIE HAVENS

THE WHO



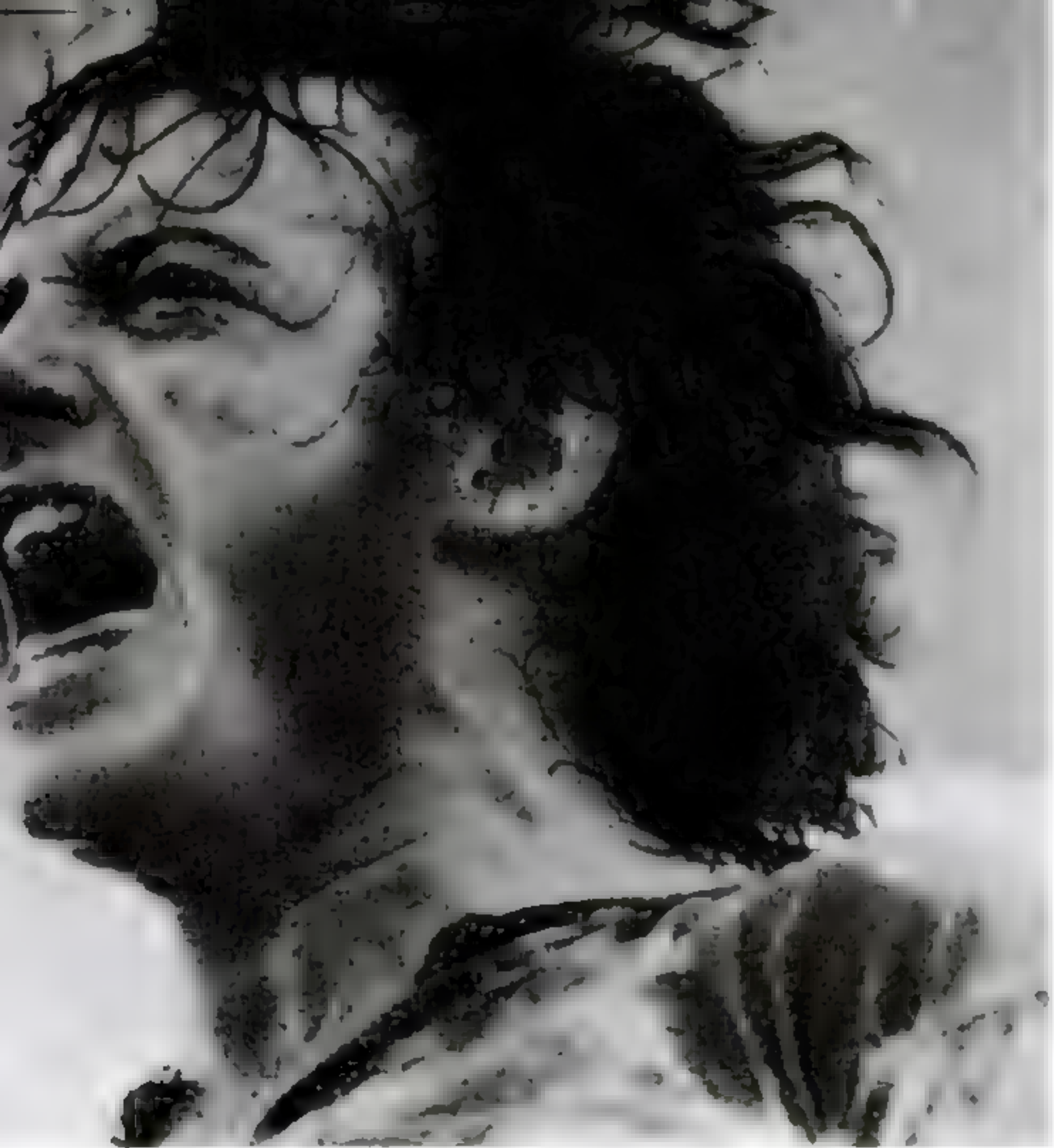
LESLIE WEST *Mountain*

DOUG CLIFFORD *Creedence Clearwater Revival*



JOE COCKER





BOB 'THE BEAR' HITE *Canned Heat*





JANIS JOPLIN

GRACE SLICK *Jefferson Airplane*











***Yes, to dance
beneath the diamond sky
with one hand
wavin' free***

BOB DYLAN









*When it all comes down
you got to go back to mother earth*

MEMPHIS SLIM





The dizzy dancing way you feel
As ev'ry fairy tale comes real JONI MITCHELL







Get yourself together

TRAFFIC





See me,





feel me, touch me, heal me THE WHO



With a little help from my friends

THE BEATLES







Lay back and groove on a rainy day

JIMI HENDRIX



Two rainstorms in three days—not a bad average for a wet summer in the Catskills. But it was two rainstorms too many for the alfalfa field where most people spent all three days, listening to the music that went on almost continuously day and night. During Saturday morning's steady drizzle and Sunday afternoon's sluicing downpour, a lucky few retreated to

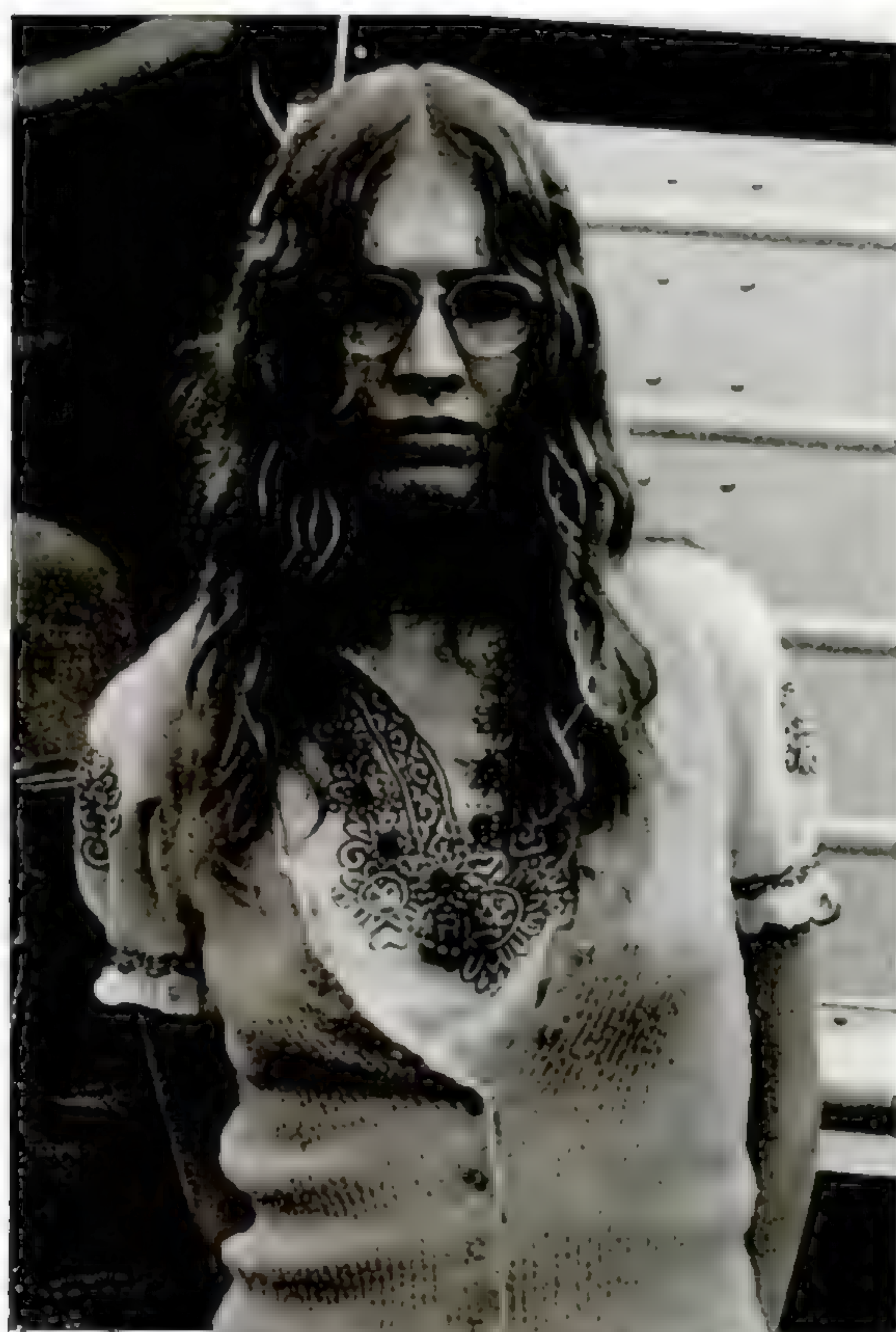
tent colonies on the surrounding hills. But most could only improvise shelters or stoically curl up in sopping sleeping bags and cling to the mud like earthworms. Groups gathered in the rain and sang (*Help!* was a favorite), and one man emerged from his inadequate shelter long enough to shake his muddy fist at the sky and signify: "You can't beat me!"







Gloria! Donald! Countermiracle at the great stoned rock show



by Barry Farrell

I'm not at all sure I could find my way back to the place that was Woodstock, not in time, not in space. I know the road that leads up to Max Yasgur's famous farm, and I doubt I'll soon forget the days I spent there. But the experience involved so many incongruities and surprises and so much that seemed to belong to the future that my memory of it resembles a flying saucer story, where you get caught in a three-day time warp and witness a universe of wonders from some forgotten swamp.

I knew I was in for more than a mere festival from the mood of the approach. The road was like a Day-Glo Ganges cutting through the safe billiard green of Archie and Jughead's America. Townspeople stood at roadside for miles around, observing the exotic pilgrimage with smiling faces and ambiguous eyes, conveying just the shade of temporary welcome they prayed would keep the peace. White-haired ladies waved *V* from their porches, as did squads of Jewish Boy Scouts in short pants and *yarmulkes*. I was headed for a farmhouse five miles from the grounds; when I arrived there at nightfall, the man across the way said a cordial hello, then went back to planting posts for his new barbed wire fence.

But all the sights along the road left me unprepared for the jolt of first laying eyes on the ceremonial pasture, a good 35 acres, paved to the horizons with people. It was as if the population explosion had occurred then and there in one burst of a stupendous life-bomb, leaving this stew of cushioning bodies, nestled together as nicely as puppies in a pet store window.

The impact on the eye brought strong emotions welling up—I felt brotherly and joyous, awed and a little alarmed. I even felt a bewildering surge of patriotism for the country that had created, however accidentally, such a vast, benign generation. Everywhere I looked people stood gaping at the spectacle. Since no one had any experience to compare to what lay before him, feelings of nationhood were quick to grow from being caught, one and all, in the same historical pinch. No one there doubted that we were crossing a cultural Rubicon.

Until that moment, I would have drawn up far short of call-

ing rock-dope an American religion. But now I was trying to think of a religion that could summon such a mass of believers whose life-style and social ethic had so much in common. The metaphor of religion was seized upon by many minds that day: the rock fans were the seekers, the stars their prophets, and drugs pretty nearly the staff of life. The prophets had little to say by way of guidance. Richie Havens, the first to perform, set the standard of philosophical speculation when he took the mike and said, "Wow! Phhhew! I mean like wow! Phhhew!"

Assaults on the senses were coming so thick and fast that each impression was devoured by another before it could be formed. Almost as an act of mental hygiene, I set myself to wandering around the grounds. The radicals present were encamped in a liberated zone across a psychedelic forest where headshops and drug dealers flourished amongst the trees. "I got hash, speed, acid, downers, snappers and glue," one young dealer bragged. The Movement people were dejected, since the festival had defused them by pulling its own gates down. There was nothing for them to do but hawk their papers and Vietcong flags, get stoned and try to enjoy the show.

There were many who had come from the communes, open-faced graceful people with well-pitched tents and tight little stone-circled fires. They were offering free food, free water, free medicine, free help—all they could give to all comers. My own eyes saw young American girls cradling the heads of hallucinating strangers in their arms. And the sight of them drove me to the point of unaccountable tears.

As night fell the scene became more dramatic still, disclosing a loud electric image of the future. From the fringes of the crowd, the stage looked like a pearl at the bottom of a pond, a circle of light fired down from towers as big as missile gantries. Just beyond it, helicopters fluttered in and out of an LZ ringed with Christmas lights, bringing in the rock groups, evacuating casualties and stars. Much music was lost under the beat of their blades—an annoyance until it was perceived as a higher music than rock alone—as rock-helicopter music, space music to

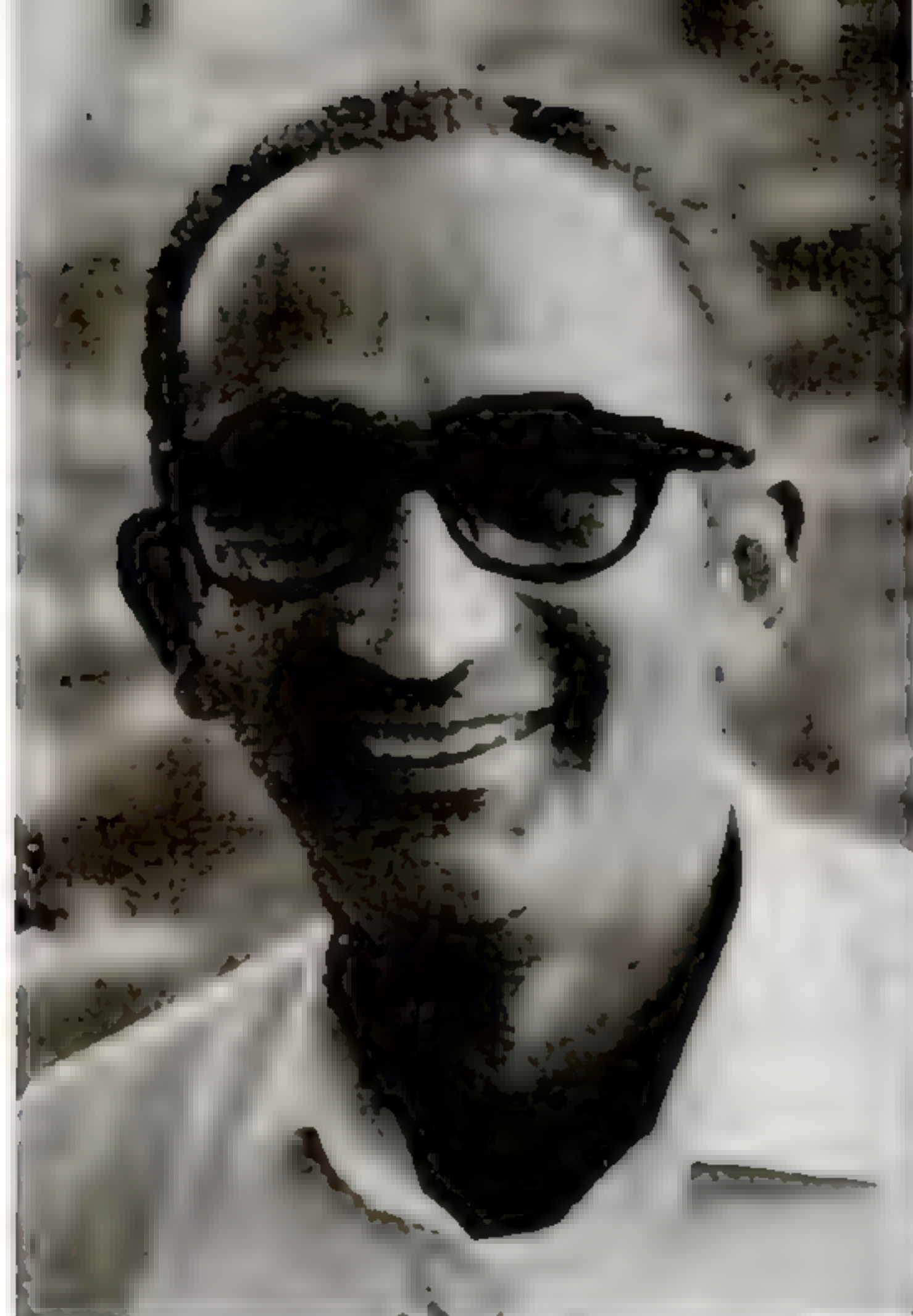
accompany the sound-and-light vision of the American '70s.

The speaker's expert voice purred across the breadth of the farm, reading off lists of the injured and ill, urging respect for the fences. In the newspeak of our age, he praised the crowd for being groovy, cautioning them not to blow the cool thing they had going by breaking any of the rules. Then he would give way to another group, and the musicians would appear, tiny forms bathed in lurid light.

On the festival's last night, when the field had turned to slime and abandoned sleeping bags lay sprawled underfoot like corpses, my feelings for the event began to darken. Everyone around me was shivering under soaked coats and blankets. Their bonfires, fed with newspapers and milk cartons, cast up a stench that hung above the meadow in a yellow haze. On the dark roads, unseen faces whispered the names of drugs to passing strangers. Mescaline? Hash? At the central crossroads, anxious voices shouted the names of lost friends. Gloria! Donald!

The great stoned rock show had worked a countermiracle, trading on the freedom to get stoned, transforming it into a force that tamed the crowd and extracted its compliance. Not that anyone minded, of course—the freedom to get stoned was all the freedom they wanted. And, being stoned, everyone was content to sit in the mud and feed on a merchandised version of the culture they created. In the cold acid light, the spoiled field took on the aspect of an Orwellian concentration camp stocked with drugs and music and staffed with charming police. The speaker's coaxing voice only enriched the nightmare, which became complete when I asked a trembling blue-faced boy if he was feeling all right. "Groovy," he said, adding a frozen smile.

The Woodstock festival has already been recorded as a victory for music and peace, and that is as it should be. But it should also be remembered as a display of the authority of drugs over a whole generation—an authority already being merchandised, exploited, promoted. It was groovy, as the speaker kept saying, but I fear it will grow groovier in memory, when the market in madness leads on to shows we'd rather not see.



Max Yasgur

'These kids were wonderful'



"I made a deal with Mike Lang before the festival started," said Max Yasgur, the farmer who owns the land where it all happened. "If anything went wrong I was going to give him a crew cut; if everything was O.K. I was going to grow my hair long. I guess he won the bet, but I'm so bald I'll never be able to pay off."

It was probably some time Saturday, after it had rained all night and the fields which had been lush and green on Friday had turned into rich red mud, that people began thinking about the farmer who owned this fine property that was being littered and overrun. Soon his name was on thousands of lips, and next was curiosity: "Who is this fellow Yasgur? What is he thinking?" It wasn't long before the first clue was in. On Saturday afternoon, to a resounding ovation, Yasgur addressed the crowd and told them they had proved to the world that a half million people could assemble on a hillside and get along with one another. He confessed he had been worried. "I feared a major catastrophe was in the making. They were wet, thirsty, hungry, tired, immobile, and facing nothing but more of the same. The prospects were horrifying."

Max Yasgur didn't expect to become so involved. "I think these kids were wonderful," he said at a post-festival press conference, "but I didn't feel this way prior to the event. I originally entered into this as a business contract but these kids changed my mind. My neighbors and I are the Establishment, but we were treated more decently, more politely by these young people than by any other group we have encountered. I think these kids have made a lot of us feel guilty because we really haven't been fair to them."

Not all Max's upstate neighbors shared his sentiments. Many of them responded to the situation with understanding and generosity, but feelings are split on a return performance. Some locals dread the thought, while business groups from neighboring towns are already beginning to promote the idea for 1970. Meanwhile, in the aftermath of the greatest rock show ever, a force of 500 remained to doctor the ravaged acres (see next pages). "They promised they would clean it up," said Max, "and that is what is happening."

These photographers and agencies contributed to this special edition of LIFE: John Dominis, Bill Eppridge, Richard Beach, Jim Cummings-Camera 5, Henry Diltz, Betti Enfield, Irwin Glusker, Ken Heyman, Donald Kinselman, Erwin Kramer, Elliot Landy, Diana Lee, Dan Lenore, Jim Marshall, Tucker Ranaon from Pictorial, Ken Regan-Camera 5, Shelly Rusten from Nancy Palmer, Leslie Teicholz from Black Star, Mark A. Vargas, Roger Vaughan









WOODSTOCK

